



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

July 1999

Midnite Mine Meeting Rescheduled

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) would like to hear your concerns and views on the Midnite Mine site. We encourage you to attend the following meeting:

July 22nd at 6:00 p.m.
At the Longhouse
In Wellpinit, WA

A short presentation will be given and a traditional dinner will be served, but the main purpose of the meeting is to hear from you. What are your concerns about Midnite Mine? What do you know that might help us with the study and cleanup? How would you like to be kept informed about the work at the site? Your attendance is important as EPA studies the site to develop cleanup options.

The Site:

Midnite Mine is an inactive open-pit uranium mine located eight miles northwest of Wellpinit on the Spokane Tribe Reservation. In recent years, you may have participated in activities led by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to help develop a reclamation plan for the mine. EPA is continuing the studies with the goal of reclaiming the site using the Superfund law.

Between 1955 and 1981, mining of uranium ore at Midnite generated 3 million tons of ore, 2.5 million tons of lower grade ore (protore), and 33 million tons of waste rock. Much of the ore was milled at the Dawn millsite in Ford--but the waste rock and piles of ore/protore remain on site. Four of the pits were refilled with waste rock during the mine operations. Two pits remain open and contain water.

Rocks in the Midnite Mine area contain natural radioactive minerals and metals. Sulfides in rocks exposed by mining react with oxygen and cause water, such as rain or snowmelt, to acidify when it comes in contact with the rocks. The acidic water can then pick up heavy metals from the mineralized rocks and carry them into creeks and groundwater. Uranium and other radioactive minerals can also leave the mine carried by wind and water passing through the site.



Since 1992, the Dawn Mining Company (DMC) has been required to collect contaminated water flowing from mined areas. The water is treated on-site to remove contamination and is discharged to a surface drainage that leads to Blue Creek. While this effort has helped reduce the amount of contaminated water leaving the site, a more effective and permanent control is needed to protect the environment. People using the site and areas contaminated by the site may be exposed to radioactive minerals and heavy metals. As part of its study, EPA will conduct a risk assessment to understand human health risks posed by site contamination for current and future users of the area.

In April 1998, EPA conducted an Expanded Site Investigation and confirmed elevated levels of metals and radionuclides at many on-site sources. EPA proposed Midnite Mine to the Superfund list of sites eligible for federal cleanup funds in February of this year. Preparation for the study, which EPA anticipates will take 2 years, has been underway since then. The study will conclude with a cleanup decision that reflects input from the community.

How to Contact Us:

If you have questions or concerns about the site or about the upcoming meeting, please feel free to contact one of the following people:

Krista Rave, Community Relations Coordinator, in Seattle (206) 553-6686

Elly Hale, Project Manager, in Seattle (206) 553-1215

Or, we can be reached by calling **Toll Free, 1-800-424-4372**

EPA is working with Davey Wynecoop and other Tribal representatives. He can help you with any questions about the site.



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

EPA Region 10
1200 Sixth Avenue (ECO-081)
Seattle, Washington 98101

SUPERFUND FACT SHEET
MIDNITE MINE
WELLPINIT, WASHINGTON